

Obama Administration Record for Workers

“We need to level the playing field for workers and the unions that represent their interests, because we know that you cannot have a strong middle class without a strong labor movement. We know that strong, vibrant, growing unions can exist side by side with strong, vibrant and growing businesses. This isn't an either/or proposition between the interests of workers and the interests of shareholders. That's the old argument. The new argument is that the American economy is not and has never been a zero-sum game. When workers are prospering, they buy products that make businesses prosper. We can be competitive and lean and mean and still create a situation where workers are thriving in this country.”

- President Barack Obama, January 30, 2009

Since taking office, rebuilding our economy and creating jobs for America's workers has been President Obama's top priority. He knows we need to do more than just recover from this economic crisis. We need to restore security and opportunity for middle class families with the fundamental values that made our economy the strongest in the world – making sure everyone does their fair share, everyone gets a fair shot, and hard work and responsibility are rewarded. To create true middle class security, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We must out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the world. We need an economy built to last – one that creates the jobs of the future and makes things the rest of the world buys – not one built on outsourcing, loopholes, and risky financial deals that jeopardize our entire economy and threaten the security of the middle class. That's why President Obama has focused on keeping workers on the job, getting them the training and skills they need, and creating pathways back to work for the unemployed. And that's why President Obama has recognized the contributions of America's workers to our economic success and directed his Administration to defend their right to be treated with dignity on the job. The Obama Administration's record for America's workers includes:

- **Getting Workers Back on the Job:** President Obama took office in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. To respond to the crisis, the President took immediate action to put Americans back to work.
 - **Responding to the Economic Crisis by Putting People Back to Work:** At the start of his Administration, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which prevented our economy from entering into another Great Depression. The Recovery Act kept teachers, first responders, transportation workers, and others on the job, and invested in broadband, clean energy, weatherization, mass transit, roads, and bridges to create jobs and help build critical infrastructure for future economic growth. The Act included Davis-Bacon and Buy American provisions, supported by the Administration, to ensure investments would stimulate local economies and create high-quality jobs. In total, the Recovery Act supported up to 3.5 million jobs through the end of 2010, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

To download this fact sheet, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/record

- **Revitalizing the Auto Industry:** When the President took office, the American auto industry was shedding jobs by the hundreds of thousands and GM and Chrysler faced the possibility of liquidation – which would have caused at least 1 million more jobs to be lost. In the face of stiff opposition, the President made the tough choice to rescue the auto industry from collapse. Since Chrysler and GM emerged from bankruptcy in June of 2009, the auto industry has added more than 230,000 jobs, the best period of growth in more than a decade. And in early 2012, auto sales reached their highest level in four years. In addition, this Administration’s historic steps to increase fuel efficiency will provide the foundation for investment in cutting-edge technologies that will help the U.S. auto industry lead in the 21st century.

- **Creating Clean Energy Jobs:** The Recovery Act invested more than \$90 billion in clean energy – the largest clean energy investment in American history. Those investments have created hundreds of thousands of jobs and spurred thousands of clean energy projects across the country. For example, through loan programs, the Energy Department has supported nearly 40 clean energy projects that are expected to employ more than 60,000 Americans. In addition, through tax incentives, we have spurred private investment in more than 20,000 projects.

- **Providing Support and Pathways Back to Work for the Unemployed:** President Obama has provided critical support for unemployed workers and their families, fighting for critical extensions of Unemployment Insurance benefits. And he is working to give unemployed workers more pathways back to work through increased job training opportunities.
 - **Helping Americans Seeking Work:** After fighting to extend unemployment insurance in December 2010 – ensuring that 7 million people did not lose their benefits in 2011 – the President also successfully fought to ensure millions of Americans looking for work will not lose this crucial support in 2012. Along with extending Unemployment Insurance – which will prevent more than 4 million Americans pounding the pavement looking for jobs from losing their benefits – the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 has instituted landmark reforms proposed by this Administration to help the long-term unemployed access training and job opportunities to reenter the work force.

 - **Ensuring Workers Have the Skills They Need for the Jobs of the Future:** President Obama has increased support for job training programs in high-demand industries including clean energy and health information technology. He announced in the State of the Union and proposed in his 2013 critical programs – the Community College to Career Fund and the Universal Displaced Worker Program – to get workers the skills they need for jobs being created in high-growth and high-demand industries. This builds upon the \$2 billion of support that has already begun to flow to Community Colleges to develop training programs for workers through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training program. The Administration has also provided National Emergency Grants to support on-the-job

To download this fact sheet, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/record

training for long-term unemployed workers in geographic areas severely impacted by the economic crisis. And the Workforce Innovation Fund will provide \$125 million in competitive grants to encourage new and innovative approaches to job training.

- **Defending and Upholding the Rights of America's Workers:** The Obama Administration has defended the rights of America's workers, standing up for collective bargaining rights, improving enforcement of labor protections, and ensuring safer and healthier workplaces.
 - **Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act:** The first bill that President Obama signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which protects women and other workers from pay discrimination in the workplace.
 - **Standing Up For Collective Bargaining Rights:** President Obama believes all workers should have the right to join together to improve their working conditions. He has made sure that the National Labor Relations Board can continue to carry out its mission of enforcing our nation's labor laws – ensuring that individuals know their rights and protecting workers who have been illegally fired or penalized for exercising their rights to organize.
 - **Upholding Labor Protections through Stronger Enforcement:** President Obama has restored needed resources for the enforcement of basic protections for workers' rights. For example, the Obama Administration has initiated strong education and enforcement initiatives to protect workers from wage theft. The Department of Labor has recovered nearly \$600 million in back wages for over 700,000 workers. It has also expanded efforts to combat misclassification, which improperly denies employees basic workplace protections.
 - **Upholding Basic Wage Protections for Home Care Workers:** President Obama believes that all workers deserve to earn a fair day's wage for a hard day's work. The Administration has proposed to provide minimum wage and overtime protections for nearly two million workers who provide in-home care services for the elderly and infirm. This workforce provides critical in-home health care services and deserves the protections provided under our basic wage laws.
 - **Improving Workplace Health and Safety:** The Obama Administration has invested in improving workplace health and safety through increased enforcement, regulatory improvements, and education and outreach. The President has continued his commitment to improve mine safety – Federal agencies are conducting targeted inspections at mines and have released key training tools to help miners better understand their rights and responsibilities under mine safety laws.
 - **Supporting Best Practices:** President Obama has signed several executive orders to make the Federal Government and Federal contractors lead by example in supporting workers' rights. These orders establish labor-management partnership councils;

To download this fact sheet, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/record

- require the balanced posting of workers' rights; ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to discourage workers from exercising their rights; give workers the chance to keep their jobs when Federal building service contracts change hands; and encourage the use of Project Labor Agreements on Federal construction projects.
- **Ensuring Workers Can Care for Their Families:** President Obama understands the importance of work and family policies both for American workers and for employers. The Obama Administration has clarified that the Family and Medical Leave Act may be used to meet the caregiving needs of many of today's modern families. And President Obama has supported a State Paid Leave Fund to help states that choose to launch paid family and medical leave programs. The Administration has also made the Federal Government a leader in this arena: in December 2010, President Obama signed the Telework Enhancement Act which requires Federal agencies to promote the use of telework, and several agencies are piloting flexible work models.
 - **Promoting Fair Trade:** The Obama Administration has vigorously defended American workers' ability to compete on a free and fair playing field. It brought the first ever labor rights case under the Central American Free Trade Agreement, brought trade enforcement actions against China, and has achieved victories for American companies and workers before the World Trade Organization.
 - **Increasing Labor Protections in Temporary Worker Programs:** The Administration has issued new rules for the H-2A temporary agriculture worker and the H-2B non-agricultural temporary programs. These rules institute basic labor protections for both temporary nonimmigrant workers and their American co-workers. They also ensure that American workers will have the first opportunity to take these jobs, by significantly increasing businesses' obligation to recruit and hire domestically before they can bring in workers from other countries.

To download this fact sheet, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/record